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MAN OF INTRIGUE DISAPPEARS
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Prosecutors in two states warned judges against letting Ernest Keiser go free on bail.

Something about the shadowy but charming man who is credited with luring renegade ex- CIA agent Edwin Wilson back from Libya made them worry that he would skip.

"He'll never get sentenced here," predicted Westchester County Assistant District Attorney Tony Berk after a judge refused to revoke Keiser's \$10,000 bail when he was convicted of swindling \$415,000 from a suburban real estate developer.

"We didn't want to let him out because we knew he'd fly," said Alfred Scudieri, an FBI agent in Tampa, Fla., where Keiser faces trial in a similar case. The judge there set bail at \$250,000 for which Keiser put up his house in McLean, Va.

Thanks in part to testimony from an assistant U.S. attorney, both judges were convinced that Keiser would appear.

They were wrong.

William Aronwald, Keiser's attorney in both cases, said he spoke to Keiser on Jan. 28 to tell him to be in White Plains on Jan. 31 for a meeting with his probation officer.

On Wednesday, Jan. 30, Aronwald learned from the maid at the McLean house that Keiser, his wife, mother-in-law, dogs and clothes were gone. Aronwald notified authorities.

Carl Lord, an investigator for the Florida state's attorney's office, said he found Keiser had several passports with several names, a lengthy Interpol record, purported links to fugitives ranging from Nazis to financier Robert Vesco and so many tangled threads that the truth of his background is an impenetrable web.

"Frankly, we don't know who the hell he is, really," said Lord, who handled a 1973 Fort Lauderdale jewel scam in which Keiser ultimately pleaded no contest and received probation.

His name, for instance, is Ernest or Ernesto Keiser or von Keiser, his age anywhere from 63 to 70. Lord said he ended up believing Keiser was really an ex-Nazi.

Aronwald insisted the U.S. government asked Keiser to seek out Dr. Josef Mengele, wanted for his terrible scientific experiments and murder of Jews at the Nazis' Auschwitz death camp during World War II. Some reports have placed Mengele, who would be 73 if he is still alive, in South America.

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